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TAGS: [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [SMIG](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [FI](#)  
SUBJECT: FINLAND: MIGRATION IN FINLAND IN FINANCIAL  
UNCERTAINTY RESPONSE(C-RE9-00762)

REF: A) STATE 43864 B) HELSINKI 00239

1.A.1.(SBU) WHAT EFFORTS, IF ANY, IS THE GOVERNMENT IN YOUR  
COUNTRY TAKING TO FACILITATE THE RETURN OF MIGRANT WORKERS TO  
THEIR HOME COUNTRIES? WHAT ARE THE MIGRANTS' REACTIONS TO  
THIS AND ARE ANY GROUPS PARTICULARLY RECEPTIVE TO THESE  
EFFORTS?

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A Finnish Ministry of Interior (MoI) Migration official  
confirmed that no active migrant return effort exists in  
Finland. The Finnish government relies on active and ongoing  
discussion and consensus between interested employers and  
government to control labor migration. Migrant workers from  
neighboring countries in Finland voluntarily "circulate" (to  
additional countries for work) or return home after the  
season (berry pickers for example).

1.A.2.(SBU) WHAT STEPS, IF ANY, IS THE GOVERNMENT IN YOUR  
COUNTRY TAKING TO DISCOURAGE CONTINUED INFLUX OF MIGRANT  
WORKERS BY INTRODUCING LAWS TO RESTRICT IMMIGRATION AND  
REDUCE WORK PERMITS FOR THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS?

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In 2008, the Government of Finland (GoF) discussed labor  
importation treaties for third countries, namely from China,  
India, and Viet Nam. In light of the economic situation,  
this recruitment effort is tabled and will be reviewed in the  
fall (2009). An employer-driven Finnish program to employ  
temporary workers from Kosovo is also on hold. However, a  
Finnish official remarked that the EU, including Finland,  
views the Western Balkans as a labor source in the longer  
term.

One MoI Migration official expects Finland's unemployment  
level to continue to climb into next year. Finland's  
seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose to 8.8 per cent in  
June 2009, up from 6.3 per cent in the same month a year ago.  
Statistics Finland data confirmed that over the last five  
years immigrant unemployment has been 15 to 20 percent higher  
than the rate for the total population.

1.A.3.(SBU) HAVE MIGRANT WORKERS' HOME COUNTRY GOVERNMENTS  
PUT PRESSURE ON GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN YOUR COUNTRY TO ALLOW  
MIGRANT WORKERS TO STAY IN THE HOST COUNTRY?

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The MoI Migration official said that the EU is encouraging  
member states to use the migrant labor force from EU  
countries first, before importing outside labor. Otherwise,  
post found no evidence of pressure on government officials in  
Finland.

1.A.4.(SBU) HOW HAS THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AFFECTED ESTIMATED  
FLOWS OF UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS? CAN THE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN  
FOR INCOMING OR RETURNING MIGRANTS BE IDENTIFIED?

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GoF admits to very few "undocumented" migrants, though admits "illegal entry" may occur. The tax system and the payment system in Finland make it difficult for them to work with few exceptions (such as restaurants and subcontracting, covered in trafficking reporting). The number of asylum seekers has increased but officials believe the increase is coincidental to the economic crisis and more likely driven by stricter requirements in Sweden.

The Finnish immigration trend is not linear and initial statistics show immigration flow in the beginning of 2009 falling. In the first quarter of 2009, the number of working residency permit applications dropped 37 per cent in comparison to the same quarter of the year before. The number of all residency permit applications in the first quarter of 2009 declined sixteen per cent. During the same period of time, the number of persons immigrating to Finland also declined, yet net immigration to Finland remained still positive.

1.A.5.(SBU) IN WHICH ECONOMIC SECTORS OR JOB TYPES ARE MIGRANTS USUALLY EMPLOYED IN YOUR COUNTRY? HAVE THERE BEEN ANY NOTICEABLE FLUCTUATIONS IN ONE INDUSTRY BUT NOT IN OTHERS? IF SO, PLEASE DESCRIBE.  
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Most migration is in agriculture and forestry with only some in other industry such as construction, gardening and cultivation, metal industry and engineering. The MoI

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Migration official said that bus driving, cleaning and health care jobs have not been affected by the economic crisis. Finland encourages migrants for healthcare professions. Finland allows seasonal migrant berry pickers; berry pickers work on a self-employed basis. The most recent study (June 2009) by the Ministry of Employment and Economy argued that temporary foreign labor is recruited primarily in sectors with seasonal variation.

Many migrant workers come from the EU and exercise their EU citizen's right to freedom of movement. Nearby Baltic countries, such as Poland and Estonia, are most likely to be the source countries for migrants. Among non-EU migrants, the most work permit applications during 2008 came from Russia (2,115), the Ukraine (629), China (581), Croatia (281), Turkey (271), Thailand (261), the former Yugoslavia (256), Bosnia and Herzegovina (251), the Philippines (226) and Serbia (212).

1.A.6.(SBU) WHAT INCIDENTS, IF ANY, HAVE OCCURRED THAT SUGGEST THAT ANTI-IMMIGRANT SENTIMENT HAS INCREASED SINCE THE START OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS? ARE THESE ACTS TARGETED AT PARTICULAR COMMUNITIES OR FOREIGNERS IN GENERAL? WHAT IS THE POLITICAL RESPONSE TO ACTS OF HOSTILITY TOWARD IMMIGRANTS? WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF ANTI-IMMIGRANT ATTITUDES?  
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National polls, taken often by the media, have tracked an increase in anti-immigrant sentiment concurrent with the downturn in the economy. To some extent, the June 2009 Finnish European Parliamentary elections were driven by migration concerns. Timo Soini of the True Finns received the most votes of all newly-elected Finnish Members of the European Parliament (MEP) after creating media buzz with an "anti-immigrant position" that generated discussion and drove other parties to review their positions and suggest immigration programs with a broader scope.

Finland's Ministry of Interior Ombudsman for Minorities Office and various NGO officials noted that the recession has

affected the tone of immigration rhetoric, giving rise to populist arguments such as that promulgated by Timo Soini. The discussion is more muted now after the elections, but may intensify again for the anticipated fall parliamentary discussion.

Finnish public opinion on immigrants and migrants remains divided. Anti-immigrant feelings do not appear targeted to any group based on the financial crisis. In recent years, among immigrants, Somalis have reportedly been most targeted in general discrimination; Russian-speakers, the largest immigrant group, complain of bullying and name-calling.

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